

## Message Text

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PAGE 01 QUITO 01016 140115Z  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 /026 W  
-----140127Z 029366 /66

O R 140102Z FEB 77  
FM AMEMBASSY QUITO  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3213  
INFO AMEMBASSY LIMA  
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW  
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV  
USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS CZ

C O N F I D E N T I A L QUITO 1016

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: MILI PFOR EC IS PE UR  
SUBJ: SALE OF F-5'S TO ECUADOR

REF: A) QUITO 0979 B) QUITO 1004 C) QUITO 1013  
D) QUITO 1014

1. THE DEPARTMENT WILL BE RECEIVING SEPARATELY THE COUNTRY TEAM'S ASSESSMENT OF THE EFFECTS ON US INTERESTS IN ECUADOR OF OUR VETO OF THE KFIR PURCHASE, INCLUDING THE SOVIET ANGLE (REF D), AS WELL AS MY VIEW ON THE CRITERIA FOR ARMS SALES POLICY IN LATIN AMERICA WHICH ARE APPLICABLE IN THE PRESENT CASE (REF B). I WOULD ONLY ADD THE FOLLOWING REGARDING ANY DECISION REGARDING SALE OF THE F-5 HERE.

2. AFTER SEVERAL YEARS OF REFUSING TO SELL THE F-5 IN LATIN AMERICA, THE USG DETERMINED IN 1972 THAT LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES WERE ELIGIBLE TO PURCHASE THE F-5. MY UNDERSTANDING OF THE BASIS FOR THAT DECISION IS THAT THE F-5 IS A CHEAP, SIMPLER, SLOWER AIRCRAFT THAN OTHER SUPERSONICS, SUCH AS THE F-4 OR THE MIRAGE, AND THEREFORE IS NOT TOO  
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"SOPHISTICATED" FOR AN AREA INTO WHICH FASTER, MORE COMPLEX WARPLANES HAVE ALREADY BEEN INTRODUCED. THE F-5 HAS SINCE BEEN SOLD TO SEVERAL LATIN AMERICAN COUNTRIES INCLUDING CHILE.

3. IN 1974 THE US MADE A FORMAL OFFER OF F-5S TO ECUADOR. THE ECUADOREAN AIR FORCE (FAE) DID NOT DECIDE IN FAVOR

OF THE F-5, PARTLY BECAUSE DELIVERY TIMES (24 MONTHS) WERE CONSIDERED TOO LONG.

4. IN THE WAKE OF THE KFIR FLAP, THE FAE AGAIN HAS SAID IT IS NOT INTERESTED IN F-5S; THIS REFLECTS PARTLY RESENTMENT AT THE US, PARTLY A BELIEF THAT THE F-5 IS NOT ADEQUATE, AND PARTLY THE LEAD-TIME PROBLEM. THUS, THERE WILL BE STRONG RESISTANCE IN THE FAE TO ASKING US FOR F-5S. NEVERTHELESS, GIVEN THEIR DISTASTE FOR DOING BUSINESSES WITH THE USSR, THERE IS STILL A POSSIBILITY THAT THE ECUADOREANS WOULD EVENTUALLY OPT FOR THAT AIRCRAFT IF THE ONLY ALTERNATIVE WERE TO TURN OUT TO BE THE SOVIET UNION. WE MIGHT THEREFORE BE FACED WITH A SITUATION IN WHICH THE GOE WOULD SEEK TO REVALIDATE ACT UPON THE 1974 LETTER OF OFFER ON F-5S. SEEKING AT THE SAME TIME MUCH REDUCED LEAD-TIMES. WERE THE USG AT THAT POINT TO DENY F-5S IT WOULD SURELY BE THE STRAW TO BREAK TO CAMEL'S BACK.

5. I BELIEVE THEREFORE THAT IT IS CLEARLY IN THE US INTEREST TO BE PREPARED TO OFFER THE F-5 ON AS ATTRACTIVE TERMS AS POSSIBLE. IF WE DO NOT DO SO, THEN THE ECUADOREANS MAY CONCLUDE, AS THE FAE CHIEF OF STAFF ALREADY HAS, THAT WE DON'T GIVE A DAMN ABOUT THEIR SECURITY PROBLEM, WITH UNFORTUNATE CONSEQUENCES FOR OUR ABILITY TO PROMOTE AND DEFEND US INTERESTS HERE.  
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## Message Attributes

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**Review Markings:**  
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